



News Release

STATE OF MARYLAND

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

Martin O'Malley
Governor

Anthony G. Brown
Lt. Governor

Gary D. Maynard
Secretary

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Mark Vernarelli (410) 339-5065
Major Priscilla Doggett 585-3320

MARYLAND HOUSE OF CORRECTION IS CLOSED

***Governor and DPSCS Secretary announce swift action:
655 inmates moved in one week to shut down
19th century maximum-security prison in Jessup***

TOWSON, MD (March 19, 2007)---Governor Martin O'Malley and Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services Secretary Gary D. Maynard announced today that the 129-year old Maryland House of Correction is closed. The closure comes after a carefully arranged transfer of more than 800 inmates in less than one month's time. In fact, the Maryland Division of Correction (DOC) transferred 655 inmates in the prison's final week of operation.

"This was a bold initiative and I salute the people of the Division of Correction and the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services who made it happen," said Governor Martin O'Malley. "We said from day one that this was a problem that needed to be addressed, and quickly."

"When I took this job, my top priority to protect the public, our employees, and the inmates was to close this facility," says Secretary Gary D. Maynard, who took over the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) just a few weeks ago. "This facility is not suited for modern-day incarceration, much less maximum-security."

The House of Correction, built in 1878, was one of the oldest prisons in the United States still in use for maximum-security. The imposing structure, situated on a hill in Jessup, has been in continuous use since the day in opened.

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As recently as last summer, the historic prison housed more than 1,250 inmates. In the past few weeks, the Division of Correction (DOC) has transferred hundreds of inmates to other state prison facilities; some have also been transferred to out-of-state prisons.

In addition, DOC officials undertook an intensive system-wide inmate reclassification, to determine which inmates were best suited for which facilities. "The work involved in this effort has been tremendous," said Acting Commissioner of Correction John Rowley. "I'm proud of our people, without whose tireless effort this very difficult operation could not have happened."

The closure of the prison will actually have a positive impact on correctional officer vacancies in the Jessup region. In fact, DPSCS anticipates filling every vacancy in the region by transferring the House of Correction officers and employees to other prisons. **No employee will lose his or her job due to the closure of the House of Correction.**

Later this year, the Division of Correction will add more prison beds when the third housing unit at the state-of-the-art North Branch Correctional Institution near Cumberland opens. North Branch will add even more beds next year, upon completion of its fourth and final housing unit. North Branch is a maximum-security institution.

The House of Correction hospital, which provides medical care to inmates from all Department facilities in the Jessup region, will remain open. In addition, once the inmates are gone, some correctional employees will remain at the House indefinitely, conducting inventories and doing other jobs.

"This is an historic day for Maryland, for the Department of Public Safety and for the Division of Correction," says Secretary Maynard. "I'd like to personally thank all of our employees who made this momentous announcement possible."

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Maryland House of Correction Fact Sheet

- ✚ Built in 1878, the House of Correction is one of the oldest prisons in America. It has been in continuous use since the day it opened.
- ✚ As recently as 2006, the average daily population of the House of Correction was 1,241.
- ✚ The average daily cost per inmate at the House of Correction is typically among the highest in the entire 27-facility Division of Correction system. (In FY '03, for example, it was \$86.01 when the DOC systemwide average was \$63.11.) This is due in large part to the difficulties associated with providing security in an outmoded, very old, and multi-tiered facility.
- ✚ One week ago today, the population of the House was 655.
- ✚ No DPSCS employee will lose his or her job as a result of the closing. All will be transferred to other facilities.
- ✚ The House closing should eliminate the tremendous vacancy problem that has plagued the Jessup region DPSCS facilities for several years.
- ✚ Some former House of Correction employees will take jobs in Baltimore prison facilities, thereby reducing vacancies in that region as well.
- ✚ Inmates from the House of Correction have been transferred to Division of Correction prisons across the state, from Cumberland and Hagerstown and Baltimore to Westover on the Eastern Shore.
- ✚ 97 inmates considered to be among the system's most disruptive were transferred to state prisons in Virginia and Kentucky, as well as to federal prisons all across the nation via the Federal Bureau of Prisons.

Inmates were selected for out-of-state transfer based upon

- their history of assaults and serious behavioral issues
- gang-related activity
- continuing negative influence on the community

from

Selection of the inmates was based upon input

- institutional intelligence officers
- prison administrators and staff
- local law enforcement agencies which evaluated the inmates' negative influence on the community